

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 L-01 H-01 INR-05 PM-03 PRS-01  
SP-02 TRSE-00 USIA-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 NSCE-00  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 /043 W  
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R 271620Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4219

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 6789

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, IT  
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI'S VIEWS ON ITALIAN DEOMESTIC  
POLITICS

DURING HIS VISIT TO ROME APRIL 26, JOHN DISCIULLO, OUR CG  
IN GENOA, HAD A LONG CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER  
FORLANI AT THE LATTER'S STUDY AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE. HERE  
ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF FORLANI'S THOUGHTS ON THE DOMESTIC  
SCENE.

1. FORLANI ARGUED THAT, GIVEN CONTINUED REFUSAL OF HIS  
PARTY'S TRADITIONAL POLITICAL PARTNERS TO JOIN IN ANY  
ALLIANCE WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WHICH EXCLUDES  
THE COMMUNISTS, HIS PARTY FINDS ITSELF IN THE UNENVIABLE  
POSITION OF APPEARING TO REJECT THE PREFERRED COOPERATION  
OF ALL THE PARTIES OF THE SO-CALLED CONSTITUTIONAL ARC--  
IE, ALL EXCEPT THE NEO-FASCISTS--FOR THE RESOLUTION OF THE  
UNPRECEDENTED SOCIAL-ECONOMIC CRISIS THAT THREATENS  
THE COUNTRY'S DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS." CONSEQUENTLY,  
HIS PARTY, ITALY'S DOMINANT AND LARGEST POLITICAL FORCE,  
IS FORCED TO SUFFER THE INITIATIVE OF OTHERS (SUCH AS  
THE SOCIALISTS AND "EVEN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS") RATHER  
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THAN PROPOSE ITS OWN. IT WAS FOR THESE REASONS THAT  
FORLANI, IN HIS SPEECH AT ANCONA OVER THE WEEKEND,  
ALIGNED HIMSELF IN SUPPORT OF MORO'S PROPOSAL AIMED  
AT "TESTING" THE READINESS OF ALL THE POLITICAL FORCES  
TO COOPERATE WITH THE DC IN THE RESOLUTION OF THE KEY  
ISSUES, SUCH AS PUBLIC ORDER, WHICH UNDERLIES THE  
PRESENT CRISIS. SUCH "PROGRAMMATIC CONVERGENCE", IF

ACHIEVABLE, WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO CHANGE THE CURRENT "POLITICAL FRAMEWORK", I.E. BRING THE COMMUNISTS INTO THE GOVERNMENT OR THE GOVERNMENT'S PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY.

2. CITING HIS OWN WELL-KNOWN "INTRANSIGENCE" VIS-A-VIS THE COMMUNISTS, FORLANI SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN IMPRESSED WITH THE VIRULENCE OF THE OPPOSITION TO ANY DEAL WITH THE COMMUNISTS THAT HE FOUND AMONG HIS AUDIENCE OF YOUNG CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARLIAMENTARIANS AND LOCAL LEADERS IN HIS OWN ELECTORAL STRONGHOLD OF ANCONA. HE CLAIMED THAT HE WAS FORCED TO "THROWN WATER ON THE FIRE" LEST HIS FIERY LISTENERS "BUST UP THE PARTY" OVER THE ISSUE OF RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNISTS. HE SAID THAT HE HAD ARGUED THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL FOR THE PARTY TO GO UNITED TO THE UPCOMING "CONFRONTO" WITH THE COMMUNISTS TO ASCERTAIN THEIR READINESS TO COOPERATE ON ESSENTIAL ISSUES, WITHOUT, HOWEVER, CHANGING THE PRESENT "POLITICAL FRAMEWORK".

3. FORLANI PREDICTED THAT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE OF THE PARTY WHICH MEETS, BEGINNING TODAY, APRIL 27, WILL GIVE FULL SUPPORT TO MORO'S UPCOMING EXPLORATORY TALKS WITH THE POLITICAL PARTIES. HE ALSO BELIEVES THAT IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO CALL A MEETING OF THE PARTY'S DELIBERATIVE NATIONAL COUNCIL TO RATIFY WHATEVER PROPOSALS ARE ADVANCED TO AND AGREEMENTS MAY BE REACHED WITH THE OTHER PARTIES, INCLUDING THE PCI, IN PARTICULAR.

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4. ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE OTHERS REFUSED TO ACCEPT DC CONDITIONS AND INSISTED ON A CHANGE IN THE "POLITICAL FRAMEWORK", FORLANI SHRUGGED BUT THEN ADMITTED THAT IN THAT CASE EARLY ELECTIONS MIGHT BE THE ONLY WAY OUT. HE SAID HE OPPOSED SUCH ELECTIONS BECAUSE THEIR OUTCOME, WHICH WOULD SEE BOTH HIS PARTY AND THE COMMUNISTS GAIN AT THE EXPENSE OF THE SMALL PARTIES, WOULD NOT RESULT IN THE BREAKUP OF THE PRESENT PARLIAMENTARY IMPASSE. FOR NEITHER HIS PARTY NOR THE PCI WOULD BE LIKELY TO WIN A DECISIVE VICTORY TO RULE ALONE. FORLANI ARGUED THAT IT WAS "EXTREMELY IMPORTANT" TO SALVAGE THE "CUSHION" OF SAFETY THAT THE SMALL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES STILL PROVIDED AND WAIT FOR THE DAY WHEN THEY MIGHT SEE THEIR WAY CLEAR TO RETURN TO GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. ASKED IF HE BELIEVED THAT THERE WOULD BE A GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE CONNECTED WITH THE UPCOMING EXPLORATORY TALKS, FORLANI SAID THAT ANY SUCH RESHUFFLE WOULD BE AN ITEM OF DISCUSSION "ONLY AFTER" THE

ACHIEVEMENT OF A PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT WITH THE OTHERS.

5. COMMENT: CONVERSATION WITH FORLANI WAS FREQUENTLY INTERRUPTED BY PHONE CALLS FROM, AMONG OTHERS, PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI AND INDUSTRY MINISTER DONAT-CATTIN. TO THESE AND TO SOME OTHERS, FORLANI PROMISED THAT HE WOULD SEE THEM AT TODAY'S DIRECTORATE'S MEETING, AFTER HIS RETURN THIS AFTERNOON FROM STRASBOURG WHERE HE IS CHAIRING THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL MEETING. A PHRASE THAT RECURRED IN FORLANI'S CONVERSATION WITH MOST OF HIS PHONE INTERLOCUTORS WAS "THE STAKES ARE VERY HIGH" AND IT WAS VITAL THAT THE PARTY BE "UNITED" AND CLEAR ON ITS ESSENTIAL POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES. TO DONAT-CATTIN, WHO WAS APPARENTLY INSISTING FOR A GATHERING OF THE PARTY'S NATIONAL COUNCIL, FORLANI GAVE TENTATIVE BACKING SAYING THAT THERE MIGHT BE A CHANCE

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TO CALL THE COUNCIL TOGETHER "BEFORE THE NEXT CABINET MEETING", PRIOR TO THE LONDON ECONOMIC SUMMIT. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT MORO WILL PROBABLY GET A FAIRLY LIMITED MANDATE FROM HIS PARTY'S DIRECTORATE TO NEGOTIATE A "PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD" ON FOUR OR FIVE ISSUES, INCLUDING, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PUBLIC ORDER AND UNIVERSITY REFORM. WE BELIEVE THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS ARE REASONABLY UNITED IN THEIR DETERMINATION TO RESIST PRESSURES AND DEMANDS FOR COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT'S PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE COMMUNISTS, AND PERHAPS EVEN MORE THE SOCIALISTS, WILL BE PREPARED TO GO ALONG WITH SUCH LIMITED CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PROPOSALS. GARDNER

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009